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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

Gul complains to Annan about Kirkuk - Milliyet
Palestinian police to take over security in Gaza - Sabah
Peres vows to follow the US on Iran - Aksam
Putin assures Sharon Russia not to sell missiles to Damascus - Aksam
No-global army ready for action in Davos - Sabah
Legendary journalist Safire writes farewell column - Sabah
Winter storm claims 19 lives in US - Hurriyet

OPINION MAKERS

Zarkawi shows his teeth: 2 die in attack on Allawi's office - Radikal
5 days to go, Iraqis still don't know who to vote for - Zaman
An election without candidates - Cumhuriyet
Shiites pledge a secular government for Iraq - Cumhuriyet
Peace hope in Palestine: Armed groups agree to end attacks - Zaman
Bush's ranch of dictators - Yeni Safak
Syria's Assad: We seek peace, not missiles - Yeni Safak
Oskanyan hopes Turkey will open border with Armenia soon - Zaman
Global warming to reach point of no return - Cumhuriyet

BRIEFING

Gul letter to Annan on Kirkuk, Iraq elections: FM Abdullah Gul has sent a letter to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in which he conveyed Ankara's sensitivities regarding Kirkuk, and warned against attempts to change the demographic balance in the region, Turkish papers report. Gul also highlighted the significance of the upcoming elections in Iraq, and called for the widest possible participation by all ethnic groups in the country. He also said that a failure to meet the expectations of the Iraqi people would cast a shadow over the legitimacy of the polls. "Milliyet" claims that Kurdish voters will vote at a separate ballot box on a referendum concerning Kurdish sovereignty. Meanwhile, the MFA played down recent claims by Talabani in which the PUK leader said he had received 'written guarantees' from the US and British ambassadors on Kurdish plans to dominate oil-rich Kirkuk. A Foreign Ministry source said that such statements were for 'domestic consumption.' 'Talabani's remarks, which were posted on a Kurdish webpage, contradict his official statements,' MFA spokesman Namik Tan said at a weekly press conference.

Iraqi Turkmen to Split Votes: "Milliyet" reports that votes by Iraqi Turkmen in Sunday's election will be split three ways, thus reducing the number of Turkmen elected to the new Iraqi assembly. According to the report, Shiite Turkmen will vote to support Shiite candidate lists, will Sunni Turkmen will divide their support between the Iraqi Turkmen Front and the Turkmen Nationalist Action Party. The article claims that as a result of the three-way split, the number of Turkmen in the new assembly will be reduced from more than 20 to around 15 - 6 Shiites and 9 Sunnis.

US Forces 'Destroy History' in Iraq: A front-page story in "Milliyet" accuses US forces in Iraq of 'destroying history' by not displaying appropriate sensitivity to the destruction of the country's cultural and historical heritage. The article claims that US sharpshooters were placed in the minaret of the Great Mosque at Samarra, which was constructed in the tenth century. The minaret was severely damaged when insurgents opened fire on the US positions. "Milliyet" adds that the destruction in Samarra follows allegations that US forces allowed significant looting of Iraqi cultural assets following the 2003 invasion and

established a military base in the heart of ancient Babylon.

Ankara has conditions for opening border with Armenia: Armenia's FM Vartan Oskanyan told "Zaman" that Armenia now officially recognizes all accords that had been signed with third countries under the Soviet regime, including the 1921 Kars Agreement with Turkey. On his return from Moscow January 12, PM Erdogan mentioned that Turkey would open its border with Armenia if Yerevan honored the Kars Agreement. "Zaman" comments that Ankara is looking for 'deeds, not words' on controversial issues such as Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenian territorial claims, and the 'genocide' issue. The paper also reports that a parliamentary committee will invite Turkish journalists of Armenian origin for a discussion of 'Armenian genocide' claims.

PM Erdogan meets with 'TRNC' opposition: PM Erdogan met with Turkish Cypriot opposition leaders Mustafa Akinci and former 'PM' Dervis Eroglu in Istanbul on Monday. The Turkish Cypriot leaders said that, whatever the outcome of the February 20 general elections in north Cyprus, they would continue to move together with Turkey for a settlement on the divided island. Erdogan said Turkey would not pull back troops from Cyprus in the absence of a settlement.

Canadian PM visits Ankara: Canadian PM Paul Martin stopped over in Turkey last week while en route to the tsunami-hit countries of south Asia. Martin met with Energy Minister Hilmi Guler on January 15, according to "Milliyet." Martin and Guler discussed Turkey's plans to construct three nuclear plants by 2012. They also discussed projects to improve Turkey's rail system and operations at goldmines in Turkey.

US Official Terms Baykal Claims 'Ridiculous': "Radikal" reports that a US embassy official characterized as 'ridiculous' claims by CHP leader Baykal that efforts to undermine his leadership in the party were being encouraged by the United States. The official said that the US Ambassador had not met with Sarigul since he announced his opposition to Baykal. He confirmed that Sarigul participated in an International Visitors' program to the United States in 2004, but stressed that 30-40 Turks participate in such programs each year. Meanwhile, 104 of 137 Istanbul delegates to the January 29 CHP convention have reportedly signed a written commitment to support Baykal against potential contenders for his leadership post.

EDITORIAL OPINION: The Second Bush Administration

"Is Freedom the Only Goal?"

Sami Kohen opined in the mass appeal "Milliyet" (01/25): "During his second term inauguration speech, President Bush used the word 'freedom' forty times. This seemed a clear indication that the US foreign policy priority in the new term will be spreading freedom and democracy? President Bush stated that the main goal of his foreign policy will be to establish freedom in countries now ruled by despotic regimes. I wonder what how Bush's will act in the new term to export or impose freedom and democracy over the inevitable objection of these despotic regimes. Of course, the establishment of democracy and freedom in places now ruled by totalitarian regimes is an ideal that should be supported strongly. But it is both wrong and dangerous for the US to try to establish democracy in these countries by force. These are risky policies. The situation in Iraq is a very good example. In order to fight against terrorism after September 11, the US started to coordinate more with countries ruled by despotic regimes. Now is Bush really ready to sacrifice the US' apparent strategic and economic interests in these countries just for the sake of freedom? Or is Bush's freedom campaign only a part of the US strategy to rule the world?"

"The Neo-Hitler is Crowned"

Ozgen Acar wrote in the leftist nationalist "Cumhuriyet" (01/25): He's no longer just the American President! The ones who came before him were American Presidents, but for the past four years he has been the 'global president.' From what we can guess from the message in his inauguration speech, George Bush now intends to be the 'president of the universe.' He will not be content just to lead the United States during his second term. Through the doctrine of a 'force for freedom,' which he mentioned countless times, he intends to create in other countries what he has created in Iraq. In 1945 Franklin D. Roosevelt spent 20,000 dollars on his inauguration. For his coronation, George W. Bush spent more than that just on the yellow roses. People paid 200,000 dollars to spend the night in a hotel where they could watch him dance for one minute. Intellectuals who understand that when Bush talks about a 'force for freedom' he really means 'blood' were horrified by what they heard in his speech. It was as if he were taking an oath not as President of the United States, but as a kind of 'neo-Hitler.' Dr. Justin Frank, former president of the US Pshyciatric Association, had the best commentary on this.

According to Dr. Frank, George Bush, who became an alcoholic after growing up under the supervision of a very strict mother, suffers from 'paranoia.' He is a 'megalomaniac' who insisted on having his speech changed 21 times. He receives messages from outer space, from Jesus, from God. In fact, he is a 'schizophrenic' who should be treated in a mental hospital. The Turkish people, who opened their hearts to former President Clinton, had already made the same diagnosis as Dr. Frank and other intellectuals around the world. According to a BBC survey, 82 percent of Turks don't like President Bush. During the coming months, Bush will be going to Brussels. He will meet with Gerhard Schroeder in Germany and with Jacques Chirac in Washington. But according to one Russian newspaper, 'he will talk but he won't listen.' An Israeli newspaper put it this way: 'Hang on to your hats gentlemen. The strongest winds of ambition ever felt will be blowing from Washington for the next four years.'

"What Freedom?"

Turgut Tarhanli observed in the liberal-intellectual "Radikal" (01/25): "According to George Bush's inauguration speech, the fire of freedom has been lit in the world. This fire could burn those who stand in its path while warming the ones who stand to benefit. The real meaning of this freedom fire is nothing but a justification to use force to reach US goals. There is no place for justice in this fire. Bush doesn't mention justice in his speech, but rather the establish freedom and democracy, a concept familiar to the American people. Based on the world order established in 1945, there lies an ethical responsibility for superpowers. But the the US effort to spread freedom does not take such ethical considerations into account. In the end, it can only be viewed as a cruel dream."

EDELMAN